DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 332 497 FL 018 321

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TITLE Cultural Considerations in the ESL Curriculum: A Selected, Annotated Bibliography.
PUB DATE 89
NOTE 9p.; In: ESL/EFL Methodology: Topical, Annotated Bibliographies, Volume 1 (FL 018 315).
PUB TYPE Reference Materials - Bibliographies (131)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Annotated Bibliographies; Classroom Techniques; Cross Cultural Studies; *Cultural Awareness; *Cultural Context; *English (Second Language); Intercultural Communication; Second Language Instruction; Teaching Methods

ABSTRACT

This annotated bibliography, developed as a part of a course in methodology for teaching English as a Second Language (ESL), focuses on cultural aspects of classroom teaching. Published during 1986, 1987, and 1988, the selected material covers a variety of issues, including discourse analysis, contrastive rhetoric, reading theory, and many other related aspects of ESL instruction. Highly technical linguistics articles and sources specific to one culture or methodology are not generally included. Literature types include journal articles, books, and studies. Each of the 35 citations contains basic bibliographic information and a brief annotation. (MSE)

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ED332497

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EN 740 ESL Methodology/gebhard
Fall 1988

Cultural Considerations in the ESL Curriculum: A Selected, Annotated Bibliography

The program in which I pursued my Masters in Language and Writing was a small one--so small that a crusty, old American Structuralist, Leo Engler, was for all intents and purposes the entire linguistics department (and may he never read the above description--the truth sometimes hurts). "Uncle Looie" was near the end of an illustrious and productive career, and in virtual semi-retirement. Despite the abuses such a situation can and did court, my exposure to research in the field of applied linguistics was as extensive as that experienced by graduate students at any of the major research universities--Texas (Austin), Kansas, Georgetown--at which Dr. Engler had formerly been posted. His research battle cry was "The best of the latest, the latest of the best." In that spirit, I offer a selective, annotated bibliography.

"Latest" in this case translates loosely as material published within the last three years. However, "best" is, at best, a relative term; so let me speak briefly to some procedural concerns.

A current popular assumption in the ESL field is that culture is captured in the naturally occurring speech, information sources, and literature of a country--sources readily available to both us and our students. My concerns in compiling this bibliography, therefore, were more global. I have avoided sources specific to any one culture and any one methodology. I have also avoided, for the most part, those sources so technically linguistic in nature that they seemed to cloud rather than clarify the issue. My goal was to provide a resource which, given any methodology, will provide both a justification and a starting point for introducing cultural concomitants into an ESL curriculum. This bibliography will provide, as well, a selective overview of who said what in this vein over the past three years.

Finally, inasmuch as consideration of culture touches on discourse analysis, contrastive rhetoric, reading theory, and virtually all other areas of instruction in and learning of English as a second language, I have simply classified the entries by the year in which they were published.

Contents:

Selected material published during 1986..... p.2
Selected material published during 1987..... p.4
Selected material published during 1988..... p.7

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SELECTED MATERIAL PUBLISHED DURING 1986

Condon, J. (1986). Exploring intercultural communication through literature and film. World Englishes, 5(2-3), 153-161.

Suggests that literature and film have untapped potential for increasing understanding of intercultural relations. Points out both the problems and advantages in the use of these media.

Contributions of cross-cultural research to education practice. (1986). American Psychologist, 41(10), 1049-1058.

Cites extensive cross-cultural research on cognitive development. This research has the following three phases of interaction with education: (1) the application of western approaches to the third world; (2) the search for culturally specific modes of learning; and (3) the testing of innovations for minority children.

Guglielmino, L.M. (1986). The affective edge: Using songs and music in ESL instruction. Adult Literacy and Basic Education, 10(1), 19-26.

Promotes music as an effective instructional method for enlivening the English as a second language classroom and as a source of both linguistic and cultural information. The approach can be used to address various learning styles. Examples and guidelines are provided.

Irving, K.J. (1986). Communicating in context: Intercultural communications skills for ESL students. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Provides gradated readings and exercises for the purpose of developing vocabulary, reading, and discussion skills appropriate to an English-speaking culture. Useful adjunct within a classroom setting.

Lewis, T.J. & Jungman, R.E. (1986). On being foreign: Culture-shock in short fiction. Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press.

Illustrates the various stages of culture-shock via the use of international short fiction. Provides discussions of the various stages in relation to the stories.

Purves, A.C. & Purves, W.C. (1986). Viewpoints: Cultures, text models, and the activity of writing. Research in the Teaching of English, 20(2), 174-197.

Explores three knowledge-oriented issues related to the activity of writing. Each of the issues is seen as being in part culturally determined, whether the culture be the larger culture of a language or social group or the smaller culture of a profession or academic discipline. Suggests future areas of research.

Smith, L.E. (1986). Cross-cultural understanding and English literatures from other circles. World Englishes, 5(2-3), 241-248.

Reports on the effectiveness of the use of creative writing in English to increase cross-cultural understanding, based on a study of Japanese businessmen reading portions of English novels translated in Japanese and Thai. (The article itself makes far more sense than this summary would suggest.)

Swaffer, J. (1986). Reading and cultural literacy. Journal of General Education, 38(2), 70-84.

Discusses some implications of cultural literacy for the classroom use of English and foreign language texts. Defines cultural literacy as the ability to read the thought-system that underlies the surface-signs of a culture's infrastructure. Explores the applicability of this concept in reading pedagogy and explores, as well, the teacher's role in this kind of reading environment.

Tomlinson, B. (1986). Using poetry with mixed-ability language classes. English Language Teaching Journal, 40(1), 33-41.

Discusses the value of using poetry to teach English as a second language to mixed-ability classes. Lists the following criteria for selecting poems: (1) universal appeal; (2) surface simplicity; (3) potential depth; (4) affective potential; (5) contemporary language; (6) brevity; and (7) potential for illustration. Uses two different poems to describe technique.

Valdes, J.M. (1986). Culture bound: Bridging the cultural gap in language teaching. New York: University Press.

Contains three parts and eighteen chapters and attempts to provide language teachers with a basis for introducing a cultural component in their teaching. The interaction between language and culture is explored in ways that will encourage students to understand another culture without necessarily embracing it.

Venditti, P. & Bahruth, R.E. (1986). Enhancing communicative competence and cultural adaptation of ESL students: Using dialogue journals and interactive errands. San Antonio Community College. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 275 132)

Describes two out-of-class techniques used to promote communicative competence among community college students of English as a second language (ESL). Journals provide regular interactive written communication between language students and their instructors. Errands are programmed, interactive tasks, performed singly and in pairs, executed within the bounds of the school or surrounding community. Specific activities are suggested.

Yule, G. (1986). Comprehensible notions. Applied Linguistics, 7(3), 275-283.

Examines the integration of cultural/background knowledge and insights into the relationships between linguistic forms and the semantic interpretation of those forms. Suggests using obvious form-function relationships to provide the learner with comprehensible notions that will serve as a foundation for future learning.

SELECTED MATERIAL PUBLISHED DURING 1987

Carrell, P. (1987). Content and formal schemata in ESL reading. TESOL Quarterly, 21(3), 461-481.

Investigates the sumultaneous effects of and interaction between both culture-specific content schemata and formal schemata on English as a second language reading comprehension. Results indicate that content schemata affects reading comprehension to a greater extent than formal schemata.

Floyd, P. & Carrell, P. (1987). Effects on ESL reading of teaching cultural content schemata. Language Learning, 37(1), 89-108.

Examines intermediate-level English-as-a-second-language students for levels of reading comprehension. Half of each group (experimental and control) receives more complete versions of test passages than the other half, and the experimental group is taught appropriate cultural background information between pre- and post-testing. Results indicate background knowledge does improve reading comprehension.

Gardner, P. (1987). Cultural differences in non-verbal communication: Practical activities for the ESL/EFL classroom. Cross Currents, 14(1), 17-36.

Provides a series of exercises intended to sensitize students to intercultural differences and develop an awareness of culturally determined values and perceptions which may affect nonverbal elements of communication.

Holland, D. & Quinn, N. (Eds.). (1987). Cultural models in language and thought. New York: Cambridge University Press.

In five parts, fifteen chapters, presents papers by anthropologists, linguists, and psychologists that explore the nature of cultural knowledge from a cognitive perspective. Attempts to detail the cognitive organization of cultural models and relate it to everyday language and understanding.

Holmes, J. & Brown, D.F. (1987). Teachers and students learning about compliments. TESOL Quarterly, 21(3), 523-546.

Analyzes examples of misunderstandings in compliment exchanges in different cultures and provides a set of exercises to assist learners in developing the ability to recognize and use compliments appropriately.

Kaplan, R.B. (1987). Cultural thought patterns revisited. In U. Conner & R.B. Kaplan (Eds.), Writing across cultures: Analysis of L2 text (pp. 7-22). Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Suggests that rhetorical style is culture-specific. Proposes that an extensive knowledge of a target-culture's rhetorical style will facilitate communication.

Lehmann, W.P. & Jones, R.L. (1987). The humanistic basis of second language learning. The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 490, 186-193.

The necessity of learning a language in its social and cultural contexts affects choices with respect to curriculum, materials, and approaches. Argues that language teachers must be allowed to make informed choices in these areas in order to teach language in relation to such social and cultural values.

Levine, D.R., Baxter, J., & McNulty, P. (1987). The culture puzzle: Cross-cultural communication for English as a second language. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Attempts to provide a link between culture and communication by emphasizing the cultural rules of conversation in the American context. Provides examples of realistic conversational interactions and exercises which illustrate aspects of cross-cultural communication.

Luce, L.F. & Smith, E.C. (Eds.). (1987). Toward internationalism: Readings in cross-cultural communication. Cambridge: Newbury House.

Provides readings dealing with a range of communicative settings. The readings are divided into seven chapters dealing with the following issues: (1) cross-cultural literacy; (2) cultural adjustment; (3) cultural values; (4) nonverbal communication; (5) verbal communication; (6) cultural roles; and (7) cultural perceptions and stereotypes.

McKay, S. (1987). Cultural knowledge and the teaching of reading. English Teaching Forum, 25(2), 18-20, 28.

Promotes reading as an interactive process that involves not just process strategies but also background knowledge. Suggests that for ESL students, a lack of assumed cultural knowledge may affect reading comprehension. Makes some recommendations regarding text selection.

McKenna, E. (1987). Preparing foreign students to enter discourse communities in the U.S. English for Specific Purposes, 6(3), 187-202.

Deals with the dynamics of classroom behavior in an American college lecture class. Observational study provides an analysis of question types and their effect on the development of discourse in the classroom. Provides English-for-academic-purposes activities developed from the resulting question typology.

Nelson, G.L. (1987). Culture's role in reading comprehension: A schema theoretical approach. Journal of Reading, 30(5), 424-429.

Reports findings of a study involving adult, college-educated Egyptians enrolled in English-as-a-second-language course in Cairo. Concludes that students learning to read in a second language interpret materials in terms of their own culture, which affects their comprehension of those materials.

Pfister, G.G. & Poser, Y. (1987). The cultural inventory: A tool for increasing comprehension of foreign language materials. Foreign Language Annals, 20(4), 317-322.

Describes the inventory technique, a reading tool which helps second language students to use their background knowledge and experience in overcoming the gap between native and foreign cultural perspectives. The cultural inventory worksheet helps students collect and organize cultural information in written foreign language material, allowing them to develop predictive strategies regarding the text's meaning.

Sherzer, J. (1987). Discourse-centered approach to language and culture. American Anthropologist, 89(2), 295-309.

Defines discourse as the concrete expression of language-culture relationships. Claims such discourse transmits both culture and language as well as their intersection, expecially in verbally artistic and playful discourse such as poetry, magic, verbal dueling, and political rhetoric.

Takeshima, H. (1987). Acculturation and second language learning: Use of comics to measure the degree of acculturation. IRAL, 25(1), 25-40.

Compares the performance of Japanese college students on a cloze test and a test using comic strips to assess English-as-a-second-language acculturation. Results revealed that the comics were as effective and reliable as the cloze test, and that the comics' attractiveness appeared more effective in activating students' minds.

Webber, M.J. (1987). The role of culture in a competence-based syllabus. Theory into Practice, 26(4), 251-257.

Defines culture as a "dynamic pattern of significance" within a society and explores its pedagogical potential in foreign language instruction. Claims that, as functionally defined, culture can enhance students' motivation, interaction proficiency, and ability to understand and be understood.

Winterowd, W.R. (1987). Literacy: Kultur and culture. Language Arts, 64(8), 869-874.

Defines and discusses the two terms in light of the work of both Freire and Hirsch. Treats the paradox that students both inherit and make culture. Charges that education must somehow give students a broad spectrum of cultural knowledge, allowing them to view themselves as creators of culture.

SELECTED MATERIAL PUBLISHED DURING 1988

Krasnick, H. (1988). Dimensions of cultural competence: Implications for the ESL curriculum. TESL Reporter, 21(3), 49-55.

Presents unresolved issues involving teacher cultural competence and, more generally, the measurement of cultural competence. Focuses on the definition of "cultural awareness" as opposed to "cultural sensitivity." Suggests that defining the limits of such terms has implications not only for teacher training but for cultural competence as a part of the ESL curriculum.

Patrie, J. (1988). Comprehensible text: The daily newspaper at the beginning level. TESL Talk, 18(1), 135-141.

Suggests that the daily newspaper, as the most local of locally-produced materials, can be used in a beginning-level ESL classroom to achieve the two basic goals of any ESL program: the development of linguistic skills and the fostering of cultural awareness. Provides ways of using the newspaper to capitalize on students' interests and their consumer and survival needs in developing comprehensive input for basic and even literacy levels.

Prodromou, L. (1988). English as cultural action. English Language Teaching Journal, 42(2), 73-83.

Examines the tension that arises when the culture of the English native speaker and that of the learner come into contact. Claims that such tension makes learning more difficult and suggests that the native-speaking teacher recognize the international status of English but work from locally accessible varieties.

Purcell, J.M. (1988). Cultural appreciation through literature. Foreign Language Annals, 21(1), 19-24.

Considers ways in which teachers can determine and teach aspects of cultural appreciation through the literature of the target language. Presents a possible evaluation scheme in choosing literary models that is based on four cultural-evaluative categories: (1) authentic; (2) acultural; (3) burlesque; or (4) deformed.

Singer, E.A. (1988). What is cultural congruence and why are they saying such terrible things about it? (Occasional Paper No. 120). East Lansing, MI: Institute for Research in Teaching.

Defines the concept of cultural congruence--classrooms compatible with the cultural context of the communities they are supposed to serve--and promotes cultural congruence as an approach to combat school failure for minority students. Responds to recent attacks on the concept, suggesting such attacks misrepresent the cultural congruence model. (Although not dealt with directly, the concept could be of substantial value in the second language classroom.)

Swaffer, J.K. (1988). Readers, texts, and second languages: The interactive process. Modern Language Journal, 72(2), 123-149.

Attempts to address the issue of the schism between "language" and "content" within the profession as it impacts curriculum planning. Provides exhaustive overview of current reading theory and practice, and it includes an extensive bibliography.